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REVIEWS AND CRITICISMS.

PSYCHOLOGY OF TESTIMONY AND REPORT. (The following survey is reprinted from the *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. XI No. 7, July 15, 1914, pp. 245-250.—*Ed.*)

The references to Hegge and Franken are repeated from last year's list because of my inability to review them at that time. Hegge (10)¹ deals with the problem of scoring the picture test, with special reference to the computation of *P* (the number of possible items.) For the well-known *Bauernstube* picture Stern selected 76 items, but some observers report 164 items, and Hegge obtained 289 different items from eight observers. Hegge recommends computing *P* by this empirical method. He also calls attention to the fact that the several coefficients of report, range, fidelity, etc., calculated for any given test do not have a constant value for the observers, but merely a relative value for the given test, as, for instance, in comparison of sex, age, race, etc. Other analyses are made by Hegge, who shows, for example, that good reporters give more items and hence suffer grater liability of error, but may actually make fewer errors because they are more cautious and critical.

Franken's article (8) is an elaborate extension of his work by the *Methode der Entscheidungs-und Bestimmungsfragen*, already explained (this BULLETIN, 1912). A distinction is made between right and wrong and between true and false answers. Answer to the *Bestimmungsfragen* ("What is the capital of France?") may be right or wrong: answers to the *Entscheidungsfragen* ("Do you know what city is the capital of France?") may be true or false. The following are some of the main conclusions: 1. Those who give many right answers usually also give many wrong, but few false answers. 2. Those who give many false answers usually also give many wrong answers. 3. Range of memory and class standing usually show good agreement. 4. The formal characteristics of memory (range, readiness and fidelity) are as a rule positively co-related. 5. Those persons whose information is of average amount usually exhibit the least truthfulness, whereas those with a small amount of information owe their greater truthfulness to their lack of ambition, while the gifted resist opportunities to false report through their great cautiousness. 6. The well-informed are, as a rule more ambitious, but also more truthful than the poorly informed. Other conclusions refer to the effect of allowing shorter or longer periods for reflection before the answer is demanded.

Dallenbach (5) used the picture test, supplemented by a test of memory for geometrical forms of different sizes, shapes and colors, with 20 college men for the purpose of investigating the effect of various time-intervals (zero, 5, 15 and 45 days of zero, 1, 3 and 6 days) between exposure and report. In general, errors increase with time-interval, rapidly at first, then more gradually: thus, for

¹Figures in parentheses refer to references at the conclusion of the review.

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one picture, the per cent. of error in the narrative was 10.5, 14.3, 18.0, and 22.4 for intervals of 0, 5, 15 and 45 days, respectively. Dallenbach also found fidelity and certainty positively correlated, regardless of time-interval. In his test with forms, errors were greatest with colors, next with position, next size and lastly shape. Errors were greatest in the green and least in the yellow tones.

An elaborate qualitative analysis of report has been contributed by Schultz (17). The analysis is based upon reports gathered from university students and also from teachers in description of a pre-arranged episode in the classroom of Professor Aall. The following are some of the forces at work in determining the nature of report: (1) What things are noted depend partly on the observer's mental state at the time, partly on the objective complex in which the things occur. (2) Attention is caught by novelty and by the logical significance of the impression. (3) The actual items noted and reported are more extensive than what the observer is aiming to perceive: there is a "spread" of observation outside the main objects of attention. (4) Optimal conditions for report are given when novelty supplies a motive, but familiarity of details affords ease of comprehension. (5) When a strange even interrupts suddenly into a familiar and commonplace setting, a certain amount of time is necessary before attention can be readjusted to the new situation. For this period of readjustment reports are bad. (6) Reports show the presence of perseverative tendencies, enough to make it probable that "perseveration plays an important rôle in the errors of witnesses." Since this tendency decreases with time, it follows that reports given directly after an event need not be the best. (7) Reports are affected by a process of logical elaboration, emphasis of the essential, dropping of the unessential (principle of economy of consciousness). (8) Descriptions of persons tend to fall into more or less preconceived types. (9) Some persons embellish their reports to secure better literary form and may thus distort them unintentionally. (10) Emotion produces decided distortion, especially of verbal items (quotations). (11) Better reports are secured when the reporter believes himself seriously responsible for his statements.

The lecture given by Pick (16) at Vienna is another discussion of the qualitative aspects of the report, but is confined to pathological aspects, such as retrograde amnesia, the erroneous filling of gaps in memory, resistance to attempts to fill in such gaps, false feeling of familiarity or lack of familiarity (cryptamnesia). Pick points out that these phenomena are characteristic of hysteria and other pathological conditions, but that they may also be developed in normal persons under the stress of strong emotion.

Two books testify to the progress made in jurisprudence in assimilating psychological facts and principles. That by Arnold (1), however, can scarcely be said to reflect or embody any of the recent experimental work, as its author apologizes for the inability to read German and makes up in this second edition for his lack of acquaintance with Stern's work by quoting freely from Münsterberg's *Psy-*

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chology and Crime. On the other hand, Wigmore's large volume (26) is a work of the first water: he has drawn freely from modern discussions and presents a constructive program for the better training of students of law and other interested in disentangling masses of mixed evidence.²

The remaining references can be passed over more briefly. Gross (9), v. Mach (12), v. Beneckendorff and v. Hindenburg (3), Mothes (13) and Türkel (23,24), all are confined to citations of cases or experiences that have come up in their daily work illustrative of this or that feature of the psychology of testimony. Boden (4), Stöhr (19) and Sturm (21,22) have given excellent summaries of those portions of the psychologist's work on testimony of special concern for jurists. These contributions are refreshing examples of the genuine interest taken by some jurists in the scientific examination of testimony, and have the additional merit of setting a number of constructive problems for the psychologist.

Basch (2) gives some account of the errors that appear in testimony relative to nuncupative wills. Näcke (15) points out that the unreliability of the statements of persons who have taken alcohol depends to a great extent upon individual susceptibility as well as upon the absolute amounts consumed. Storch (20) tried the picture test as a means of diagnosing manic and depressive states of insanity and concludes that the method furnishes a useful supplement to the other devices of the alienist. Both types are below normal in spontaneity and range of knowledge: manics are incautious and unreliable, but depressives are cautious and reliable. V. Kármán (11) protests against the low rating given by many psychologists to the testimony of children, and agrees with Gross that under some circumstances they are quite valuable witnesses. Winch (27) reports briefly upon experiments with English school children by the aid of the regulation picture test. Fiore (6,7) has taken up the psychology of testimony in Italy: his general review summarizes the contributions made in that country since 1906. Münsterberg (14) had students

²See Professor Whipple's review of Dean Wigmore's book in this Journal Vol. V. No. 2, July 1914, pp. 316 and 317.

estimate which of two cards had the greater number of spots on it, and then revise their estimates after a discussion of their opinions. He claims that such a test presents a good counterpart of the situation facing a jury and that the fact that his men students voted more nearly right after the discussions substantiates the general faith in the value of jury trials. Unfortunately for the other sex, his experiments showed that women were unconvinced by such discussions, whence he argues that there exists a sex difference that "makes men fit and women unfit for the task that society requires from jurymen." Weber's lecture before a pedagogical society at Chemnitz (25) shows the relation between pathological and normal lying, with special reference to the transition between the two. He believes that truthfulness has to be developed in every child, that parents must avoid getting children into situations that incite to lying and by continued training gradually develop a respect for truth.

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For a more extended and critical survey of the work in the field of testimony during the years 1911-1913 the reader should consult the valuable general review of Stern (18).

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